

if the information of facts respecting the management of the poor was more complete, and that information collected and applied to establish certain principles.

For instance, was it necessary to know whether houses of industry should be encouraged or permitted by the legislature to extend themselves over a greater proportion of the kingdom than they now occupy? Let the inquiries into the state and condition of the poor in those districts where they have been established a length of time be applied, to know whether they have decreased or increased population. If they occasion population to decrease, they should not be encouraged, because it is a proof that they do not tend to the happiness of the governed: if population is progressive, the answer is in their favour in that respect. Are the manners of the poor better or worse in these districts than where no house of industry has been erected? Are fewer crimes committed, less drunkenness and debauchery in practice? Have houses of industry tended to increase or diminish the poor's rate? If it appears to be the general tendency of the information applied to this question, that the morals of the poor are more correct, that the poor's rate, where these houses have been instituted, has not advanced *pari passu* with those districts, in similar circumstances as to the kind of work the poor are employed in where there are no houses of industry, be it in general agriculture or manufactures, the answer in this respect is also in their favour; and all the declamations against them, as being dissonant to the feelings of the poor, fall to the ground; for, in districts where such measures are pursued with the poor, that population rather increases than decreases, where the moral duties are more generally attended to, fewer crimes committed, and the poor maintained at less expense. What can a legislator require more to convince him that houses of industry, in districts ~~not~~ regulated, are not detrimental, but an advantage, to society?

Information thus obtained throughout the kingdom, and inquiries thus applied to other leading principles respecting the poor,

would form a solid unerring basis founded on experience, on which principles of legislation might be built, which, in all probability, would be attended with the best effects.

If sufficient information is already obtained, and in the possession of those who have as well the power as the inclination to be of service to their country, on this very important point of legislation, nothing remains but to apply that information properly; and there can be no doubt but those, in whose possession that information remains, will so apply it, if they possess it; and it is not too bold an expression to assert, that the *salvation* of this country depends on its being so applied.

There is no doubt but the information received by the House of Commons respecting the years 1776, 1783, 1784, 1785, is very valuable; but it certainly is vague and diffusive, and cannot easily be concentrated so as to apply to a particular point; and, if it could, it respects the situation of the poor in those years, not in 1797. How far the questions in the memoir alluded to would tend to give annually sufficient information, that a person at a *coup d'œil* might see the precise situation of the poor in every parish of the kingdom, is not attempted to be stated; but, supposing it would not *completely* answer that purpose, there is no doubt but, with proper attention, a schedule, according to which the overseers might be directed to keep their accounts, could be formed, which would answer that purpose; and it is the measure at large these pages attempt to support, not this particular specification of it.

Before this Letter is concluded, it remains to take notice of two acts of parliament which passed in 1793; by the first of which the law of removals is considerably altered; by the other, friendly societies are farther encouraged, and their powers extended.

The 35 Geo. III. c. 101. after reciting in the preamble the 13 and 14 C. II. cap. 12. repeals so much of that act as enables justices to remove paupers *likely to become chargeable*, and enacts that no person

person shall be removed to the place of their last legal settlement until they shall have become *actually chargeable* to the parish in which they shall inhabit.

The second section also empowers any justice of the peace to suspend the order of removal, if it shall appear to him that the pauper is unable to travel, by reason of sickness or any infirmity; and that the charges incurred by such suspension shall be paid by the officers of the parish to which they are ordered to be removed, with costs; but, if such charges and costs exceed twenty pounds, an appeal lieth to the quarter-sessions. And that this act shall not alter the power of justices to punish vagabonds, except as to suspending the vagrant-pass on account of illness.

The third section enacts, "That no person, coming into any parish, township, or place, shall, from and after the passing of this act, be enabled to gain any settlement therein by delivery of notice in writing."

The fourth, That no person shall gain a settlement by paying public taxes or levies for any tenement of less than ten pounds yearly value: and, by the remaining section of this act, rogues and vagabonds are to be considered as chargeable, and may be removed; as are unmarried women with child; and, in case their removal is suspended until after birth, the child is to be deemed and taken as settled in its mother's parish.

No one but must generally approve of the principles of this act; but a question occurs on the consequences resulting from the third section, which enacts, that no person shall gain a settlement by delivery of notice, which in fact they could not, before the act, without a residence afterwards of forty days. Is notice, therefore, now necessary to gain a settlement? Does not this clause virtually repeal the necessity of notice, and leave an opportunity for a pauper to gain a settlement by a residence of forty days, by virtue of 13 and 14 C. II. cap. 12. without notice? — If it is the meaning of the statute that, by notice and residence of

forty days taken together, the pauper shall not gain a settlement, the clause ought to have expressed as much, and no doubt could have arisen : at present there appears to remain some difficulty as to the legal meaning of the third clause.

The charges of maintenance during the suspension of the order of removal, and the costs attending the order and the removal, being saddled upon the parish to which the pauper is sent as his place of settlement, is undoubtedly right, according to the present principles of the law of settlements. But are those principles founded on the broad basis of equity? — They certainly are pregnant with inconvenience and expense.

Reimbursement, by the parish where a pauper is settled to the parish in which he has, before his removal, resided, of any sums of money that may have been expended in his maintenance or relief, is a subject which requires some discussion, as it is attended with expense and trouble, and is, in some degree, open to an expensive, if not a fraudulent, demand upon the parish, which has reaped no benefit from the labour of the pauper, by the parish which has had the advantage of his exertions, while he was capable of any. If it is an *equitable* claim, although it may increase the aggregate of expense, it may be right to sanction it; if it is *not equitable*, and it can be proved to be inconvenient and expensive, it ought not to be encouraged by the sanction of law.

It is an acknowledged principle, by the wisest politicians, that the riches of a country are in proportion to the industrious exertions of the individuals of a country, and consequently an increment of industrious population is an increment of riches. The observation applies as well to a city, a town, a village, as to a kingdom.

An individual, removing from the place where he was born, has lived in service, served an apprenticeship, or, by any means, obtained, under our present system of poor-laws, a settlement, removes,

moves, from the place where he has incurred a debt of gratitude, if not a civil obligation, for the protection received, while incapable of benefiting in any considerable degree the place in which he received it, to another place, for the purpose of making the most of his time and labour: the parish to which he removes, and where he resides, receives all the benefit arising from that time and labour, and, in proportion to the number of such residents in a parish, has that parish increased in population, and individuals in it in riches. In the mean time, the parish where the labouring-man was settled, but has not resided, has reaped none, or very trifling, benefit from its parishioner: which parish then ought, in justice, to bear the expense of the maintenance of this man, when his ability to labour is diminished, and his expenses exceed his power to provide for them? There surely can be no doubt upon the question. The conclusion which naturally follows is; that it is a sufficient act of injustice to the parish in which a man is settled to send him home to be maintained, when he can no longer earn his own maintenance, without charging his place of settlement with those expenses which have arisen, to the parish which he has benefited by his labour, in consequence of this humane act of parliament which suspends his removal, while, from illness or infirmity, it is thought improper by the magistrate he should be removed.

That expenses are daily arising throughout the kingdom, by this principle of reimbursement being carried into practice, *is a fact*; as it is well known, from experience, that the maintenance of the pauper, after his order of removal is suspended on account of illness, is not managed, by the overseers of the parish where he remains resident, on that close scale of economy with the maintenance of their own paupers, because they know the order from the magistrate will entitle them to reimbursement; neither is the pauper conveyed to his place of settlement with that cheapness which his own overseers would be interested in attending to; and, as this

does not arise between a few parishes only, but may take place between *almost fifteen thousand parishes*, as to such paupers as may not be resident in their own parishes, among a number of our countrymen liable to become chargeable, amounting, I fear, to six millions; and, it is presumed, the number of non-residents in their own parishes will increase, as the laws are more liberal in allowing of a residence in parishes not their place of settlement; the aggregate of expense saved by annihilating the reimbursement will be very considerable; and will be still a greater object, should the bill now before the parliament pass into a law.

By 35 Geo. III. c. 111. societies established before passing the act of 33 Geo. III. c. 54. for the encouragement of friendly societies, may exhibit the rules, orders, and regulations, for their government at any general quarter-sessions, before or immediately after the Michaelmas session, 1796, and such rules, so being confirmed in the manner recited in that act, shall be valid and effectual.

By the second clause, governors, directors, managers, or members, of any institutions for the purpose of relieving widows, orphans, and families, of the clergy, and others in distressed circumstances, may frame rules and present them for confirmation, in the same manner as societies established by virtue of the Friendly-Society Act.

And, by the third clause, institutions, whose rules shall be confirmed and registered, may appoint treasurers, and be in every respect entitled to the benefit of the Friendly-Society Act, and also of this act.

LETTER LIII.

THE summer of 1795 also introduced this kingdom to the experience of such a scarcity and extravagant price for corn, as the oldest man cannot before remember; nor has the history of the last

last centuries informed us of. The causes of and the consequences arising from this most alarming period of time, which we have now, as far as it respects the price of all kinds of grain, weathered, shall not be canvassed in the following pages, any farther than as they have affected or do still affect the poor, and the management of them.

Some lights of information may possibly be collected from the scene of distress we have lately passed; some observations may possibly be made, some facts may be stated, as a foundation for principles of legislation, on a subject respecting which, one may venture to say, there is not in the kingdom a heart so cold to the cause of humanity and of his countrymen, as not to feel an interest, and not to be willing to offer his mite of information to rescue the poor, as far as may be, from their miserable state, and the nation from its ruinous and increasing expenses on their account.

Without recurring to the numerous facts with which the public prints of the time were filled, which, if individually related or referred to, would occasion this rude sketch of the History of the Poor to emulate in bulk the history of a great nation in detail; it is presumed that some valuable truths may be collected from the whole, which, being made use of, may prevent those whose high office it is to give us laws, or to propose them, from any material deviation from what is right, in the attempt to improve the situation of the poor, by amending the system which prescribes the management of them.

The first observation which occurs is, that the impulse, occasioned by the pressure of scarcity and the high price of corn, on the minds of the people, excited in them the idea of riot and mischief, and, in many places, instigated them to the actual attempt, by taking away the corn brought to market, by threatening the personal safety of the farmers and millers, and destruction to their property; and, in some instances, by carrying those last threats into actual execution..

The facts which are stated in the prints of the time gave rise to another observation; that, in proportion as the magistracy of the country were prompt and determined in the execution of their duty, by putting the laws in force, and convincing those assembled, that their return to peaceable conduct was the only means to insure relief to them and their families, did the symptoms of riot and disorder disappear, and our indigent countrymen, by experiencing assistance from the gratuitous contributions of their more opulent neighbours, together with an allowance from the rate raised for their relief, vastly greater than any they had before experienced, or imagined that in any event they should have received, passed through this period of threatened famine and actual scarcity without any observable increase of human mortality.

A third matter, it is believed, may also be stated as a fact, that, in no instance, through any breadth of country, did the additional increase the poor received to their income, from wages, gratuitous donations, and parochial relief, approach the increased price of bread.

Another fact also shall be taken as granted, that, in proportion as rise of wages formed the principal mode in which relief was given during the times of scarcity, does dissatisfaction and disappointment now prevail either with the employer or the employed. As there are many instances in the history of this country of the mischief done by the populace from the first impressions on their minds, whether excited by the actual pressure of distress, as in those cases where dearness of provisions has alarmed their attention, as has lately happened; or from the incitements of demagogues to riot and misrule, from political or party motives; it surely is a striking truth, that, whatever can produce a more constant active inspection as to the management of the poor, and continually impress upon their minds, that the watchful eye of superior authority is ever over their interests and conduct, as well to guard those interests from being affected, any farther than direct necessity impels, from that

that influence of the seasons and times, which no human wisdom or foresight can avert; and to take care that their conduct, while suffering under that uncontrollable necessity, shall not be such as to diminish, instead of increase, the possible means of assistance. Such an inspection and control must tend to the best effects, as it would, in the late instance of scarcity, have prevented a great waste of time, when that time was more particularly valuable, and many scenes of riot and mischief; all of which, like all other natural and political inflammatory disorders, it is a much wiser measure to prevent than to stop or allay, after the fermentation is excited: the politician as well as the physician will allow this as a maxim, that it is easier to prevent than to cure a morbid affection.

The same principle is also strongly inculcated from the second observation that has been made, that a prompt attention to the rising disturbance, and a determination to execute the duties of magistracy, were attended with the best effects: but, when the populace were collected, more coercive means on the one hand, and more explanation and persuasion on the other, were necessary to dissipate the risen tumult, than magistrates, unprotected by any means of defence, were, in every case, willing or able to make use of; because, in general, a delicacy of sentiment prevails as to calling in the aid of the military, except in those cases where the disposition of the mob is notoriously riotous, their behaviour threatening and audacious, and they are in the fact of committing acts of mischief; besides, on this occasion, the urgent cause for their alarm and dissatisfaction was obvious to every man's feeling; the price of bread-corn continued rising, before the harvest of 1796, to a height hitherto unprecedented, and bearing no proportion whatever with the means which labour, by its largest wages, could procure to purchase necessary bread for a family: in many parts of the kingdom, the price of wheat amounted to above twelve or fourteen shillings the bushel, which would exhaust the whole gains^{of} of an industrious family of five or six persons, where agricultural labour is largely paid, leaving

them not a farthing for the other necessaries of life. Here then was an emergency which required the best discretion of the magistrates, who knew and commiserated the distress and alarming situation of the poor, and at the same time felt it their duty, if the voice of persuasion could not be heard, or would not be attended to, that still the peace must be preserved. From the instances of riot which occurred in that district in Suffolk, I was obliged, in the discharge of my duty as a magistrate, to attend to: I am convinced the collected populace had no conception that the existing laws, by which they were accustomed to receive relief from the overseer in their distresses, either on immediate application to him, or, being refused, by application to the magistrate, could be so expanded as to admit of an order from the magistrates for their relief, in the case then immediately pressing on their feelings and apprehensions; because, as soon as their attention could be sufficiently gained for the voice of reason to be heard, and they had been made to understand the danger they incurred by riotously assembling, with the view to over-awe and alarm those who were disposed to do every thing the laws would admit of for their relief, that if they continued assembled, assistance from the military would be applied for, but that, if they dispersed and returned peaceably to their respective homes, on the following day the magistrates of the district would attend, and then every individual head of a family, applying peaceably and by himself, would undoubtedly receive from the magistrates an order for relief, proportionate to what in their opinion the urgency of the case and the individual wants of the poor person applying required; the collected mob retired from the spot to a neighbouring field, where they talked the matter over among themselves, and in a few hours all dispersed.

The next day, four or five of those most pressed by the dearness of corn, from each of the neighbouring parishes, appeared at the justice-meeting, which was then held, when the overseers were recommended to provide flour sufficient for the consumption of their parishes

parishes till harvest, and sell it to the poor of their parishes at a price which would enable them to procure bread for their families by the earnings they made. And, an equal or superior price for corn taking place in the following winter, the poor then applying in a peaceable and orderly manner for relief, the overseers were then recommended to allow each poor family sixpence a head for each individual composing the family, weekly, over and above the casual relief they had before received, and were to continue to receive; which plan was carried into execution throughout the hundred, and every symptom of riot ceased, and, except in a very few instances, this was the only relief the poor in the hundred of Rilbridge, in the county of Suffolk, received through the time of scarcity, after a sufficiency of wheat for the supply of the demands of the poor until the harvest in 1796 was procured, by each occupier, engaging to furnish a proportional part of the wheat he had remaining in hand at a price fixed by consent, which price was to be made good to him out of the poor's rate.

The common day's wages in this county may be stated at eight shillings a week in summer, and seven shillings in winter, before the scarcity of 1795; and, except in cases of illness or accidental infirmity, a family, consisting of a man, his wife, and three children, had, in general, no allowance from the parish: he, therefore, lived upon, and his family was supported from, his earnings, together with what his wife and children could add to them; which little, whatever it might be, I fear was not increased in the time of scarcity; but, suppose it amounted to about eighteen-pence or two shillings a week, during the time of dearness, his income was increased, by the sixpence ordered to each individual of his family, to ten shillings and sixpence a week, and by the rise of wages one shilling more, and the earning of his family makes the sum thirteen shillings or thirteen shillings and ~~sixpence~~: but the quartern-loaf was risen from sixpence, its price when wheat is 12*l.* a load of five quarters, to a shilling, at ~~4*l.*~~ a load; and, for some weeks, to fifteen

teen pence; for wheat was sold as high as 30*l.* a load in this county in the spring of 1796. How then could this addition to his income enable him to support his family, when the common allowance of bread, half a peck-loaf to each individual in the family, for a week, costs him from ten shillings to twelve shillings and sixpence? It should be recollect'd, that this computation, being made by day's wages, may be rather low, where the labour is, in general, done by the piece.

In this neighbourhood, barley-cakes and potatoes were the common substitute for wheaten bread, a loaf of which was, at times during the scarcity, bought as a treat; and wheat-flour, from which seven pounds of bran had been taken in grinding each bushel, was in common use with all, both rich and poor: some used the flour without dressing, as it came from the stones of the mill. In the northern counties of England, it appears,* that barley-bread and potatoes are the food of the poor, almost to the exclusion of wheat; or that, where wheat-flour is introduced, it forms but a small proportion of the flour that makes the loaf, rye and barley being mixed with it; therefore, the poor, in this part of the island, were, by the scarcity, reduced to live on food similar to what their countrymen in the North have been, in the cheapest times, in the constant habit of using.

The adoption of these articles of food in this part of the kingdom, at this pressing time, will, in some measure, account for the poor being able to subsist themselves and families at the time the price of wheaten bread was more than doubled, while their additional income was not increased a third, as appears by the instance taken of a family of five, which is somewhat of an average-number in a poor man's family.

This fact corroborates an assertion made, in a former part of this tract, that the increase of the expenses of the poor does not arise

* Sir F. M. Eden's *History of the Poor.*

so much from the increase of the price of the prime necessaries of life as from other causes which have been mentioned; and, possibly, that man will, in the event, be acknowledged the real friend of the poor, and also deserve the good word of his countrymen, who points out in what those other expenses consist, and instigates the Parliament to an inquiry into the fact, and to an attempt to prevent the continuation of its excess.

Had bread preserved that proportion in the expenses of the poor which has been imagined, is it not reasonable to suppose that some of those substitutes for fine flour, which the scarcity of the times just past by had drawn all conditions of people to, the poor would have continued in the use of, with the view either to find money for the other purposes which they might wish to indulge themselves in, or to lay up something against the day of distress, or to preserve themselves from the necessity of application to the officers of the poor, or, in some instances, to secure themselves from the pressure of absolute distress, where large families receive large allowances from the poor's rate, but yet not sufficient, together with their earnings, to find them the necessaries of life?

But, it is believed, no such prudential savings, in this material article of life, have, in general, been continued in the domestic economy of the poor. The present moderate price of wheat has, although other articles of their consumption have remained as expensive as ever, brought them back to their former expenditure of bread, from fine flour unmixed with barley, which has also been proportionably cheap; and potatoes have nearly, if not entirely, disappeared from their bill of fare.

LETTER LIV.

IT would indicate a blameable degree of apathy to those institutions, which have equally done honour to our rulers as good to that country at the helm of which they preside, were the useful attentions of the Board of Agriculture, during the time of scarcity, by recommendations of, and instructions respecting, the cultivation of potatoes, passed over without being acknowledged. This Board has been the cause of introducing, throughout the whole kingdom, the knowledge and practice of the best methods of cultivating this most useful vegetable, and bringing it into general agricultural use: such an excellent substitute for bread, in a time of scarcity, and so nutritious a root at all times, and of such important service in the nourishment and fattening all kinds of farming-stock, but particularly swine and cattle, that there is no doubt but the cultivation of potatoes will, although the prejudices of the poor against the use of them for their general food should remain, insure this country against apprehension of any degree of famine in future, as there can scarcely be found a farmer who will not raise some quantity of them for the use of his cattle, which, in cases of emergency, may become the food of man, and his cattle be subsisted as heretofore. But, at present, and through this last winter, although potatoes have been sold at the low price of one shilling, and even so low as nine-pence, a bushel; but few have been bought by the poor in this neighbourhood; while the comparative cheapness of them, at this price, to a quatern-loaf at sixpence, must be evident to every one.

The charitable munificence of our countrymen, that virtue which has more particularly distinguished Great Britain from all countries of the globe, and has gained us a character for our humanity almost at the expense of our reputation for political wisdom, was never

never more remarkably exerted than on the late pressing occasion : but was not that portion of it which expended itself in parochial subscriptions in some measure misapplied ? As to that which privately employed itself in alleviating instances of particular distress, no observation, derogatory either to the excellent heart or sound head that dictated any of those private good acts, is hinted at. But the public subscriptions were, in general, an application of this best trait of our national character in aid of the poor's rate ; an effect which was generally perceived after the harvest of 1795 had occasioned the apprehensions of people to subside : and the high price of corn which followed, during a great part of the subsequent year, was, in general, met by an increase of the rate for the maintenance of the poor ; private charity still assisting them by every method that Charity, skilful, although secret, in her ways and means, could invent.

The rise of wages, which, voluntarily on the part of the occupiers of land, was in general a concomitant of the late scarcity, is worth our attention, as to its consequence both to the labourer and his employer ; it attended or followed the relief the poor received from public subscriptions, private charity, and the poor's rate ; and, as far as the high price of corn was the effect of any other cause than the small produce of the crops, high wages rightly accompany high prices ; or, if the price increased in a greater ratio than the produce was deficient, an increase of wages justly accompanied an increase of profit : but, if the price arose solely, or principally, from the deficiency of produce, and was not increased by extraneous means ; augmented wages, if not voluntary, would be an injustice to those employing the poor ; because, in that case, deficiency of produce occasioning the increase of price, no extra-profit would remain for the occupier ; but he, having an increased poor's rate to pay, and his family to maintain from the decreased produce of his lands, would find himself in a worse situation than any

any of the various classes of commercial men in this country, whose capital and time are not employed in raising food for man.

This is mentioned to point out one of the consequences attendant on any plan, constituting a ratio between the price of corn and the price of work; to demonstrate that in the proportion wages of agriculture rise, as there is a deficiency of crop; while the poor-rate remains as a revenue for the poor in times of distress, issuing, in a great measure, immediately from the pockets of the occupiers of land; it is an unnecessary act of injustice to them, that the means of producing the diminished produce should, at the same time, be accompanied with an increase of expense; because an increase of wages is not called for on the principle of necessity, the poor's rate obviating the necessity.

But an increase of wages is always attended with a decrease of labour. Manufacturers have long understood this fact, and acted accordingly: every person employing workmen, where labour alone, and not the skill of the artist, is required, finds the truth of this assertion from experience: the labouring-class, in general, thinks no farther than of immediate maintenance: their own labour supplies a part of this; the parish-rate is too often looked at for the remainder, and no man prefers labour to idleness, or the interests of his more opulent parishioners to his own ease; he will not work to diminish the poor's rate; it is therefore found, that increased wages do not increase either the quantity or the quality of the work done.

And when wages are raised, as they have been of late voluntarily, on account of the emergency of the times, to keep up a certain ratio between the price paid for the exertions of labour, and the maintenance of the labourer, which was humanely, but not wisely, submitted to; ~~they~~ they easily reduced, the emergency ceasing, and a time of cheapness, as to that produce of the earth, on account of the dearness ~~of~~ which the wages of the labourer were raised, having ensued? which cheapness ~~falls~~ falls with double weight on their

their employers ; poor's rates and wages being risen, and the price of the produce of the earth being reduced.—Inquire into the fact :—the answer will be, it has not in general been attempted : in those instances, where the attempt has been made, it has created dissatisfaction, and, where persisted in, has occasioned less work to be done ; and this, although it may be apparently a paradox, when coupled with what has been before advanced, is not to be wondered at, as an effect perceived *immediately* on the reduction of the wages of labour, which *afterwards* may gradually disappear.

While the mind is revolving those circumstances respecting the conduct of the poor during this time of scarcity which we have just past by ; while we are calling in aid the powers of memory and reflection, to fix on some leading principles which may be of service in the amendment or alteration of that system of poor-laws, under the administration of which the public have expended an annual revenue, so considerable, as would occasion *theory* to declare, that extreme poverty could not remain where so much was distributed ; did not *stubborn fact*, at the same time, prove, that poverty and misery not only remain, but seem to advance, nearly in the proportion that our expenditure increases ; while idleness and dissoluteness of manners go hand in hand, and the next generation promises to be worse than the present. While these and similar circumstances strike the mind, it is difficult to avoid the appearance of some degree of prejudice against the poor, for whose benefit this inquiry was first undertaken, and with a view to whose *real* and *best* interests it is continued. Being obliged to state matters as they strike the observation, and to reason from facts as they exist ; one is led to doubt the political propriety of increasing the price of labour by law, as the necessaries of life increase in price ; although it may be at the expense of that reputation all our countrymen are desirous to be renowned for, — the reputation of humanity.

And it is a matter of much doubt, whether the character of a humane man will be preserved in the opinion of many of our ten-

der-hearted patriots, or of our village-politicians, by a recommendation of schools of industry and parochial funds, the encouragement of friendly societies, and a constant active inspection of those who have the management of the parochial revenue and the conduct of the poor; together with a regular annual parliamentary investigation of this important subject; instead of higher wages, and the present unrestrained state of idleness and dissipation in which the rising generation is, I will not say educated, but, suffered to remain.

On the other hand, it is too manifest a truth, for our present comfort and future prospects, that if a wise and well-guided hand of authority does not, as soon as possible, stretch its benign influence over the laird, and by some legislative line of conduct, which may couple our interests with our inclinations; and to which the poor and the rich, the employer and the employed, will not only willingly submit, but each of them, in their several stations, will actively coincide to carry into full execution and constant effect; were there no external cause of immense expenditure existing; no demands for supplies beyond a peace-establishment necessary; the nation could not long bear the increasing expenses of the poor; because they fall chiefly on those who raise the necessaries of life; which necessaries must of course advance in price, in proportion as larger burthens fall on the growers of them: this price must be paid by the labouring-poor, as well as by the other classes of the nation, which will occasion the rates and the price of labour still to rise. These causes and consequences, reacting on each other, may ultimately produce a crisis that we must all dread to think of.

LETTER LV.

WHILE all ranks of his majesty's subjects, by ancestral possessions, or their own industry, raised above the apprehension of want from the prevailing scarcity, were with a disinterested benevolence, publicly and in private, by donations and a voluntary increase of the wages of the labouring-poor, preserving their more indigent countrymen from the pressure of real want and apprehended famine ; the legislature of the kingdom, with a benevolence and wisdom worthy of the best ages, under the happiest governments, by its celerity in enacting those laws which were best calculated for an expeditious relief of the times, nobly discharged their important duties ; and his majesty's ministers, although in the midst of the most necessary, important, and expensive, contest with its enemies this nation was ever engaged in, with a promptitude of wise and liberal humanity, applied vast sums of money, which were raised for our defence from foreign foes, to our preservation from domestic famine, by encouraging the importation of foreign grain, by large and, before this time, unheard-of bounties ; the payment of which bounties has been one of the means which has exhausted the Treasury of its riches ; while, at the same time, the payment for the corn imported has assisted to drain the kingdom of its specie ; a measure which, although it greatly tended to remove the apprehensions of the nation, and to reduce the price of corn to a level with the means the poor had, by their own exertions and the assistance of their neighbours, to purchase it, yet has not been without certain inconveniences, the pressure of which we now feel. The topic itself is new and important, both to the public interests of the state, and to those of the private individual ; but of too extensive and complicated a nature to be here commented upon, were the knowledge and abilities of the writer equal to the disquisition ; who conceives that it is more within the line of his purpose,

purpose, and his capacity, to make some few observations on the acts which were passed in parliament this year, which solely respect the management of the poor.

The first is 36 Geo. III. cap. 10. and bears date, in the Statutes at Large, Dec. 18, 1795. This act, after a well-adapted preamble, enacts, that directors and guardians of the poor, incorporated by acts of parliament, may, whenever the average-price of wheat at the corn-market, Mark-lane, London, for the quarter, immediately preceding such annual, quarterly, or other general, meeting, shall have exceeded the average-price of wheat at the same market, during those years, from which the average-amount of the poor's rate was taken, upon the passing of the several incorporating-acts respectively, assess the several parishes, hamlets, and places, within their respective hundreds, towns, or districts, which now are, or have been, usually charged to the poor's rates, with such sums of money as such directors and guardians, &c. shall think necessary for the support and maintenance of the poor for the current quarter, and for paying the interest of the money borrowed under the incorporating-acts, and of any debts which may be incurred since the 1st of January, 1795, in the maintenance of the poor, notwithstanding such sums of money should exceed the assessments limited by the respective acts: provided, that such assessments, by virtue of this act, are made, collected, and paid, in the same manner, and subject to the same restrictions, regulations, and powers of appeal, &c. as the assessments made under the incorporating-acts. And provided also, that after January 1, 1798, the sums to be assessed, by virtue of this act, shall never exceed double the sum at present raised by virtue of any incorporating-act now existing.

This act of parliament gave a very necessary latitude, to the directors and guardians of the incorporated districts, to raise the assessments of the poor's rates, according to the urgency of the occasion; which authority they had abridged themselves of by the act of parliament incorporating them, and it has been attempted

tempted to obtain certain information to what degree each of the houses of industry, within the county of Suffolk, has made use of this authority; and for that purpose letters have been sent to the same gentlemen in the districts, who, with much obliging readiness, communicated that information which is contained in the former letters in this tract. Answers have not been returned to all the letters; but, as to those houses from which information has been obtained, it clearly appears, that the poor in them were maintained, through the years 1795 and 1796, with much less increase of rates than in any of the adjoining hundreds, where no houses of industry have been instituted; and, when the low rates at which the average of the parishes was struck in the incorporated hundreds are considered, there is reason to believe it is a matter of positive proof, that the maintenance of the poor through the two last years has not raised the poor-rates in the incorporated hundreds to half that assessment in the pound that their maintenance has occasioned the rates to be raised to in the hundreds not incorporated.

And although Sir F. M. Eden's Parochial Reports do not state the accounts of those two large incorporated houses of industry, that in the Isle of Wight and that at Shrewsbury, for either of the years of scarcity; yet as he says generally of the incorporated parishes in the Isle of Wight, that one parish pays two shillings in the pound rack-rent; another fifteen pence; another three shillings and three pence, on two-thirds of the rent; and of Grassington house of industry, Norfolk, that the average of the rates paid by the incorporated parishes may be stated at twenty pence in the pound; and, by referring to the average of the assessment of the incorporated parishes in the different houses of industry, as stated in a former Letter of this tract, it will clearly appear, when it is considered that the act of parliament only enabled them to double their assessments, that it cannot have cost those parishes, also, half the expense to maintain their poor during the last two years, estimating that ex-

pence by the poor's rate, as it cost the parishes in the country near the incorporated districts; most of the other parishes in Suffolk, if not all, and many in Essex, having expended an assessment rising in different parishes from 12*s.* to above 20*s.* and one or two parishes to 30*s.* in the pound.

The cheap maintenance of the poor, in the houses of industry, is a fact I should conceive uncontestedly proved. The wholesomeness of that maintenance has never been doubted by those who have visited them; and if they, by any means, tend to diminish the chance of human life, of which some doubt has been made in a former Letter, surely it would have appeared, and might be proved, by a diminished population; as, in most districts where they have been instituted, years sufficient have passed for a diminution of population to be perceived, had that diminution happened. That question was asked in the letters sent: the answers returned have been to this effect: —

There is every reason to believe the population has increased much. — It is generally thought that the population, since the incorporation took place, has considerably increased. — The population has certainly increased, but in what proportion I cannot say. — Population increases among the poor. — We relieve many more women in child-bed than we did. — It is to be regretted that no proof can be collected on this point in those incorporated parishes mentioned in Sir F. M. Eden's parochial reports; because, an increased population being proved with equal probability in those districts, as it is in Suffolk, there could be no doubt of the fact throughout the incorporated districts in the kingdom, and one great objection to these institutions would be done away: not that it is, by any means, the intention of these pages to recommend any means of compelling parishes to institute houses of industry; the wish of the writer is, to preserve the rights of those already instituted inviolate in every respect, (except that of compelling them to become schools of industry, as far as it is compatible with the advantage

vantage and convenience of the parishes incorporated, and subjecting them to a similar inspection and return of their state and condition to parliament, as is expected from the rest of the kingdom,) and also to preserve unrepealed the statute of 22 Geo. III. c. 83. and its amendment 33 Geo. III. c. 35. as those acts of parliament encourage them, but do not compel the institution of them.

The other act of parliament passed 24th December, 1795, and is cap. 23 of the same sessions. Its preamble recites the inconvenience that has arisen from an act of the 9th of George I. empowering parishes to purchase or hire houses, and to contract with any person for lodging, keeping, and maintaining, the poor; and that the poor, who shall refuse to be so lodged, kept, and maintained, shall not be entitled to receive collection or relief from the overseers of the parish. The inconvenience recited is, that this provision in the act prevents an industrious poor person from receiving such occasional relief as is best suited to his peculiar case, as it holds out conditions of relief injurious to the comfort and domestic situation of such poor person; it therefore enacts,

" That the overseers, with the consent of the parishioners at a vestry, or the approbation in writing of any of his Majesty's justices of the peace acting in the district, may relieve poor persons at their own houses under certain circumstances of temporary illness or distress; and that any of his Majesty's justices of the peace usually acting within the district may, at his discretion, order such poor persons to be relieved at their own houses; provided that the special cause of ordering such relief be written in such order given for relief, and that such order remain in force for a time not exceeding a month from the date of the order; and that it shall be lawful for any two justices to make any farther order for a time not exceeding one month, and so on, from time to time; as the occasion may require, such justice or justices first administering an oath as to the need and cause of such relief, in each of the above cases, and thereupon summoning the overseer of the poor of such parish to shew

cause why such poor person should not receive such relief as aforesaid : but that this act shall not extend to places where houses of industry are provided under 22 Geo. III. c. 83. or under the authority of any special act of parliament now in force." To this act of parliament humanity must give assent, and prudence cannot object.

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FROM the time that the first edition of this publication had been the occasion of introducing me to the acquaintance of Mr. Rose, a correspondence while in the country, and an interchange of sentiments on this important subject when I was in town, attended, on his part, with every polite attention and friendly civility, had been continued between us ; and, towards the end of January, 1796, I had the pleasure to receive from him a letter requesting me to meet Mr. Pitt, and several gentlemen who had paid attention to, and had at heart, the amelioration of the system of the poor-laws, at dinner at Mr. Rose's on the following Monday. Accordingly I went to town, and had the honour of meeting Mr. Pitt, and several most respectable members of the House of Commons, together with two other gentlemen, one of whom has paid great attention to the subject of the meeting, and a professional gentleman, whose abilities and technical experience are well known. Soon after the servants were withdrawn, after dinner, Mr. Pitt produced a sketch of the heads of a bill which, he said, he had in contemplation, and on which he requested the opinion of the company present ; observing, that, for the purpose of considering each topic individually, we should conceive ourselves a Committee on the Poor-Laws, and have some conversation on each head as it occurred.

Although

Although the consideration of the subject was continued, without any interruption, till between one and two o'clock in the morning, the sketch had not all passed under review; when one of the company, while the conversation was employed about orders of removal, remarking the time of the night, Mr. Pitt then observed, that it was high time for us to remove ourselves, and our committee broke up.

A day or two afterwards I received a copy of the heads which had been the subject of our consideration, and a note from Mr. Rose, signifying it was Mr. Pitt's desire that I should attend, the following day, at eleven o'clock, at his house in Downing-street, where I again met the same gentlemen, and afterwards most of them, at different times through the month of February, as it suited Mr. Pitt's convenience.

When all the heads had again been reconsidered, Mr. Rose sent me a copy of them, as then amended on reconsideration; and informed me it was desired that I should, in a pamphlet, shortly explain to the public the good effects which might be expected from an act of parliament on the plan and principle contained in the heads alluded to; and that it should be prepared for, and passed through, the press as soon as possible. I then returned into the country to prepare the pamphlet; but, being prevented some days by illness, I was not able to send it to town quite so expeditiously as was expected; and, about a week after it was sent to Mr. Rose, I was informed, by letter from him, that my pamphlet had been received and approved of; but that, in the mean time, Mr. Pitt had been indefatigable in his application to the subject; that the heads had been reduced to the form of a bill, which was then printing; that some alterations had been made, to which the pamphlet could not apply; that, as soon as printed, a copy should be sent me; and, a few days afterwards, I had the honour to receive, from Mr. Pitt, Heads of a Bill for Amending and Enforcing the Laws for the Relief, Instruction, and Employment, of the Poor. I then employed my

time in making my observations on the bill in the form it then was, and transmitted them to Mr. Rose, and soon afterwards went to town ; when he informed me that the measure was then postponed for the present.

As soon as the bill, as amended by the committee, now before the House, for the better support and maintenance of the poor, was printed, I received two copies of it from that gentleman, desiring me to make my observations upon the different clauses contained in it, and write them in the margin of one of the copies, which was to be sent back to him, which was accordingly done pretty much at large ; and I attempted to shew wherein, by its aberrations from the heads settled by Mr. Pitt and those gentlemen, whose attention to this subject has been mentioned, the bill had deviated from ~~that~~ plan which was better calculated to do the most probable good, at the least probable expense, to the public.

The Heads of the Bill for Amending and Enforcing the Laws for the Relief, Instruction, and Employment, of the Poor, proposed according to the plan opened by Mr. Pitt to the House of Commons, in the session of parliament 1796, having been printed for the benefit of the members, and again by Sir F. M. Eden, in the third volume of his History of the Poor ; and the bill, as amended by the committee, being printed and dispersed by different editions through the kingdom ; it would be absurd to reprint them in this publication, as it would increase to no purpose the expense of a book already too expensive : but some good may arise from printing the heads, which I had the honour to assist in settling, as probably it will be allowed by those gentlemen who bear in their recollection the speech, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a sketch of his ideas on the subject, on the second reading of Mr. Whitbread's bill : that these heads more nearly correspond with the masterly sketch then given in a speech, which it is to be lamented was not heard in ~~a~~ full House, ~~and~~ never has had justice done it by any minute or report yet printed ; and which, in the opinion of some good

good judges of elocution, never has been exceeded in this kingdom as an oratorical effort, in point of perspicuous compression of a comprehensive subject, terseness, elegance of expression, and effect; and to the ideas contained in which speech, the more closely any legislative plan for ameliorating the system of the poor-laws adheres, the more probable will be its good effect. The plan alluded to is, therefore, here introduced; first observing, that, in several places where the words are in Italic, the matter was not wholly determined on; and also where the word *or* is used, to point out different modes of acting, the precise mode was left unsettled; and as the payment of the county-guardians for their trouble and time was not then *positively* determined, either as to the manner or the quantum, that part of the plan is not inserted.

A SKETCH
OF THE
HEADS OF AN ACT
FOR THE
EMPLOYMENT, INSTRUCTION, AND RELIEF, OF THE POOR,
AS AMENDED, ON RECONSIDERATION, AFTER SEVERAL MEETINGS IN
DOWNING-STREET, FEBRUARY, 1796.

PART I.—*Employment and Instruction of the Poor.*

WHEREAS the laws now in force have not been sufficiently carried into practice, for employing the poor who are able to work, and for instructing the infant-poor.

Justices to be authorized within a given time to associate parishes to the number or extent of for the purpose of the *act*, *in the same manner as under the 22d Geo. III. c. 83.*

The

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The justices to be authorized and required, within from the passing of this act, to make order for the establishment of schools of industry in every parish, or set of associated parishes; and, for that purpose, to order a rate to be made in the first instance, and to be paid by instalments, for a given period, as they shall deem convenient, or to authorize a certain sum to be borrowed on the credit of the rates in the parish or *parishes* for purchasing materials to set the poor at work, as well grown persons as children, and for erecting, hiring, or purchasing, schools of industry, for the instruction of the poor, and for employing those who cannot, when instructed, conveniently work at home, either from the circumstances of the families, or from the nature of the work to be done.

Justices to be likewise authorized to compel the purchasing, at stated periods, fresh materials by the officers in each parish, or (by some mode to be provided) within each hundred, to be distributed to the officers in each respective parish, for manufacturing articles of clothing, and every other article of necessary use, for the poor within it, or such other articles for which they can find convenient sale.

An option must be given to justices, to decide on a view of the circumstances of different parishes, or with respect to different classes of the poor in the same parish.

Whether, 1. Parishes to maintain, lodge, and board, the poor employed in the schools of industry, taking the benefit of their earnings.

Or, 2. Parishes to feed and take care of them during the hours of their work, taking the benefit of their earnings.

In both these cases, the poor to be encouraged by rewards.

Or,

OR, 3. Parishes to furnish materials, implements, &c. and to repurchase the manufactures at stated prices, under certain regulations, with an option of the work being done at home or at school.

OR, 4. Parishes to furnish materials, &c. as before, leaving the families to sell the manufactures.

Provision, that if more parishes than one have, with the approbation of the justices, associated for the express purpose of adopting any one of these modes preferably, such agreement shall, in that respect, be binding.

Provision to prevent apprenticeship in husbandry for a shorter period than now allowed.

Employment on the roads of separate or associated parishes, or other parish-work.

Labour to be found, according to some one or other of these modes, for all those who are settled in the parish, who cannot find work for themselves.

Provision for cases where substantial householders shall offer to give a weekly rate for employing children in agriculture; and such children to be on the same footing as those who attend the schools of industry.

No contracts to be allowed in future for the lodging, keeping, and employing, the poor.

Places of reception, if necessary, in each county for lunatics, ideots, blind, &c. &c. Vide 9 Geo. II. c. 7.

Power to convert the subsisting workhouses into schools of industry.

PART II.—*Removals, Settlement, and Relief.*

No person to be removed as chargeable, if he shall become so only from temporary disability, or sickness; nor shall relief be withheld from him to which he shall be entitled, under this act, from the number of his children; provided

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provided that his settlement shall be ascertained, as under the Friendly-Society Act; and that, during his residence, he shall have subscribed to a friendly society, from

after the commencement of this act, if any is established in the parish or neighbourhood, and has sent his children, if required, to the parish-school of industry, or received work from thence, or employed them as above-provided.

Provided, that if no friendly society shall be established in the parish or neighbourhood, or there being one established, and the person applying shall not be able on his application to procure admission to it, then, and in every such case, his contributing a certain sum to a box, to be kept by the officers of the parish, shall be deemed sufficient. And in all parishes or towns, where there are no friendly societies, or within miles thereof, or where application shall be made by persons refused admittance to friendly societies, the parish-officers shall be compelled to receive contributions, and to pay weekly allowances proportioned thereto, during sickness, to the contributors, who shall be placed in the same situation, for the purposes before-mentioned, as if they were members of friendly societies.—Parishes, relieving, in the cases specified, persons not having acquired a settlement, to recover part of the sum given in relief, after deducting what the parish or the friendly society has received.

No relief to be given to persons not having acquired settlements in cases above-specified, except by setting them to work.

Every person to gain a settlement who has resided *five years* in a parish, and has complied with the above condition:

All persons having more than two children, ages to be fixed, to be entitled to a certain pecuniary allowance weekly, unless the overseers, &c. furnish them with the means of earning to the same amount by work, or make competent provisions for their relief, by advancing a sum of money, in the manner to be pointed out by the act.

Power to justices to order overseers, &c. to advance a sum of money to any person entitled to relief, to enable such person to purchase a cow, or other animal, so as thereby to give them an opportunity of increasing their income to the amount to which they would be entitled to relief.

Persons not to be excluded from relief in certain cases, on account of cottages in their own right which they occupy, or other visible property, not exceeding a certain amount, and of a certain description.

No person to be entitled to relief, for themselves or their families, who shall decline labour offered to them by the overseers, &c. if able to execute it.

Persons having subscribed to friendly societies, or contributed to parish-boxes, as above, for years, and becoming old or enfirm, to be entitled to a certain extra-relief from the fund raised for the poor, in proportion as their health and strength shall fail them.

PART III.—*Inspection of Parishes, and Execution of the Laws.*

Overseers to be made more permanent in office, and to be bound to answer, on oath, certain queries to be put to them by justices, and such other questions as shall be put to them, relative to the management and employment of the poor.

Power to continue overseer in office for a second year, and for subsequent ones, if three-fifths of the parish, in number and value, shall concur in the measure; but such person

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person not to be compellable to serve : the three-fifths, as before, may, however, agree to give him a salary not exceeding payable out of the rate.

Additional provisions to compel overseers to make up their accounts.

Power to be given to the resident clergyman, if rector, vicar, or perpetual curate, or to the officiating minister, if authorized by the bishop in a manner to be required, to inspect, from time to time, the *books and accounts* of the parish, and likewise any houses or schools of industry within the same ; and if, in any case, he shall be of opinion that the laws are not properly enforced, he shall have like power with that herein-after given to the guardians of the poor to apply to the justices, at their petty sessions, who shall proceed in like manner thereon.

One or more guardians of the poor to be appointed for each county, according to its extent, to be chosen by a majority of persons having freehold-estates within the county above the amount of £100 a year, and to have an allowance payable out of the *county-rates*.

No person to be eligible who is not qualified, by property, to elect as above-described.

To continue in office for four years, unless removed by justices, at the quarter-sessions, for cause assigned, at the end of which he may be chosen again.

The guardians of the poor to be required, within calendar-months of his appointment, to visit and inspect every parish or place, providing for its own poor, within the county or district for which he is appointed ; and afterwards, during his continuance in office, to visit every parish, again at least once in the course of each of the three remaining years for which he is elected. To be authorized and required, at every such visitation, to inquire particularly

particularly into the number and condition of persons supporting themselves by labour, and of those receiving relief; distinguishing their several ages and descriptions.

The amount and variation of the poor's rate, and the application of the same, under its several heads; shewing particularly the sums expended in setting the poor to work, with the particulars thereof.

The number employed; distinguishing their ages and descriptions, and the nature and value of the work done, and the manner of disposing of the same, and whether they were employed in their own houses or in the schools of industry.

The number of poor receiving pecuniary allowances, or to whom money has been advanced, under the provisions of this act, for their better support.

The state of the schools of industry, *and the houses of industry*, (if any,) with the number of persons lodged, maintained, or instructed, therein. The number of deaths within the year; the rules for the management of the said schools; and, generally, all such matters as they shall be required by the justices, at their quarter or petty sessions, to examine, and report thereupon.

The guardians of the poor to have power, for these purposes, to transmit, from time to time, any questions which they may think necessary, to church-wardens and overseers, and direct them to prepare answers, in writing, to be verified on oath, and to be authorized, also, to call church-wardens, overseers, and other persons, before them, at the time of their visitation, to examine them, on oath, and to inspect all books and accounts, to report the same to the justices at a special petty-sessions, to be held as shall be directed by the act, and then to deliver a schedule of the foregoing particulars in each parish, ac-

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cording to a form to be annexed, together with such observations as to the guardians of the poor shall seem requisite.

And the guardian of the poor shall be specially required, in every case where he shall be of opinion that all practicable measures have not been taken for carrying into execution the purposes of this act, in setting the poor to work, or furnishing them with additional means of maintaining themselves without periodical relief, to certify the same to the justices, and likewise to represent to the justices what modes of employment and assistance are, in his opinion, applicable to the circumstances of such parish; and what advances of money, and increase of rate, are necessary for the same. And, in every such case, the guardian of the poor shall leave, with the officers of the parish complained of, a copy of such certificate weeks before he shall deliver the same to the justices of the petty-sessions.

And, in case the officers of the parish shall not, at the said sessions, attend, to shew cause why the regulations proposed should not be carried into effect, the justices shall make order for their being carried into effect; and if the justices, on hearing the parish-officers, shall be satisfied that such measures ought not to be adopted, they shall make such order as they shall think fit, recording the reasons why the measures recommended by the guardians of the poor cannot be carried fully into effect.

Copies of all the orders made at the petty-sessions, and copies of all the reports of the guardians of the poor, together with an abstract, to be transmitted to the quarter-sessions.

If either the overseers or the guardians of the poor shall be dissatisfied with the determination of the petty-sessions,

sessions, power to appeal to the quarter-sessions, having given days notice thereof, whose order shall be final.

Guardians of the poor to transmit copies of their reports, and of all orders made thereupon, to the Privy-Council, with a general abstract, according to a form annexed.

The Privy-Council to employ a person to prepare abstracts of the general returns of the whole kingdom, and to lay the same, together with the returns on which they are founded, before parliament, within one month after the first of January, in each year, if it shall be then sitting; and, if not then, within twenty days after the first day of the session.

In order to enforce, still further, an attention to the due execution of the law, it might be proposed to make a standing-order of the House for referring those accounts to a Select Committee, to consider and report upon the same, and that such report should afterwards be referred to the consideration of a Committee of the whole House, where the result should be stated in distinct resolutions, as is now practised in the India-budget.

Saving clauses, respecting provisions against vagrancy, &c.

It would be with a very ill grace indeed, that any person, having had the honour of being consulted on a measure, which the very superior judgement and experience of those who afterwards reconsidered it have, with the approbation of Mr. Pitt, thought proper to alter, should inveigh against those alterations, which more mature consideration has made; on which account a respectful silence shall be preferred on every alteration except one, which so militates with the outline laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the speech

Speech which has been alluded to, as would convict me of a pusillanimous indifference to the good effect of this great measure, were it to be passed by unnoticed.

To prove the assertion, recourse must be had to that part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, which is published by Mr. Longman, in Paternoster-row, as it is said, *that* publication is from the best authority of any which has appeared in print.

" He should wish, therefore, that an opportunity were given of restoring the original purity of the poor-laws, and of removing those corruptions by which they had been obscured. He was convinced that the evils which they had occasioned did not arise out of their original constitution, but coincided with the opinion of Blackstone, that, in proportion as the wise regulations, that were established in the long and glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth, have been superseded by subsequent enactments, the utility of the institution has been impaired, and the benevolence of the plan rendered fruitless.

" While he thus had expressed those sentiments which the discussion naturally prompted, it might not, perhaps, be improper, on such an occasion, to lay before the House the ideas floating in his mind, though not digested with sufficient accuracy, nor arranged with sufficient clearness. Neither what the honourable gentleman proposed, nor what he himself had suggested, were remedies adequate to the evil it was intended to remove. Supposing, however, the two modes of remedying the evil were on a par in effect, the preference in principle was clearly due to that which was least arbitrary in its nature, but it was not difficult to perceive that the remedy proposed by the honourable gentlemen would either be completely ineffectual, or such as far to over-reach its mark. There was of course a difference in the numbers which compose the families of the labouring-poor, and it must necessarily require more to support an infant-family. Besides, by the regulations proposed, either the man with a small family would have too much wages, or

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the man with a large family, who had done most service to his country, would have too little. So that were the minimum fixed upon the standard of a large family, it might operate as an encouragement to idleness on one part of the community; and, if it were fixed on the standard of a small family, those would not enjoy the benefit of it, for whose relief it was intended. What measure, then, could be found to supply the defect? Let us, said he, make relief, in cases where there is a number of children, a matter of right, an honour, instead of a ground for opprobrium and contempt. This will make a large family a blessing, and not a curse; and this will draw a proper line of distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves by their labour, and those who, after having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon its assistance for their support. All this, however, he would confess, was not enough, if they did not engrave upon it resolutions to discourage the granting relief where it was not wanted. If the necessities of those who required assistance could be supplied, by giving it in labour, or affording employment, which is the principle of the act of Queen Elizabeth, the most important advantages would be gained. They would thus benefit those to whom they afforded relief, not only by the assistance bestowed, but by giving habits of industry and frugality, and, in furnishing a temporary bounty, enable them to make permanent provision for themselves. By giving effect to the operation of friendly societies, as had been already hinted at, individuals would be secured from becoming a burthen upon the public, and, if necessary, be enabled to subsist upon a fund which their own industry had contributed to raise. These great points of granting relief, according to the number and age of children, preventing removals at the caprice of the parish-officer, encouraging subscriptions to friendly societies, and extending as far as possible the means of employing the poor, would tend, in a very great degree, to remove every complaint to which the present partial remedy could be applied. Experience had already shewn how much could be

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be done by the industry of children, and the advantages of early employing them in such branches of manufactures as they are capable of executing. The extension of schools of industry was also an object of material importance. If any one would take the trouble to compute the amount of all the earnings of the children who are already educated in this manner, he would be surprised, when he came to consider the weight which their support by their own labours took off the country, and the addition which, by the fruits of their toil, and the habits to which they were formed, was made to its internal opulence. The suggestion of these schools was originally taken from Lord Hale and Mr. Locke, and upon such authority he had no difficulty in recommending the adoption of them to the encouragement of the legislature. Much might be effected by a plan of this nature, susceptible of constant improvement. Such a plan would convert the relief granted to the poor into an encouragement to industry, instead of being, as it is by the present poor-laws, a premium to idleness, and a school for sloth. There was also a number of regulations to which, on the same principle, it would be necessary to attend. The law, which prohibits giving relief where any visible property remains, should be abolished. It is neither consistent with policy or humanity to force an industrious man, on any temporary occasion, to part with the last shilling of his little capital, and compel him to descend to a state of wretchedness from which he could never recover, merely that he might be entitled to a casual supply. Instead of enforcing so rigorous a principle, cases might, on the contrary, occur, in which, with strict and proper precautions, small sums might be advanced by the parish to put the persons who received them in the way of acquiring what might place them in a situation to make permanent provision for themselves."

The very apposite quotation from the 14th satire of Juvenal, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer in so elegant a manner introduced, is not mentioned in this sketch of his speech; but that quotation

quotation was so aptly applied as to explain, to the greatest precision, the prevailing idea which may be supposed then floating in his mind, that its introduction requires no apology :

Gratum est quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,
Si facis, ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agis,
Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis.

The question that naturally flows from these pages in Mr. Longman's publication, combined with this quotation, is ; whether a sketch of an act of parliament which enforces schools of industry, and an annual parliamentary inspection of, and control over, the management of the poor, by obligatory clauses, which, if not carried into execution, bespeak an inattention to, and disobedience of, a positive written law of the land, and not any fault in the declaratory part of the law itself ; which principle is also enforced by another obligatory clause, with respect to finding employment for the poor, viz. that where such employment is *not found* by some of the means pointed out, *an allowance should be made from the parochial rates to the poor in a certain proportion, for such of them and their children as are permitted to live in idleness, by such an inattention, on the part of the officers of the parish, to the law of the land?*

Or, heads of an act of parliament which, in the first instance, oblige a payment to the poor in respect of their number of children, and leave it a matter of option in the district, whether schools of industry should be instituted or not ; and also, whether an annual parliamentary inspection and control should or should not be enacted ; are most in conformity with that part of the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the second reading of Mr. Whitbread's bill, which has been alluded to, as explained by this quotation from Juvenal ? without which inspection into, or some control over, the management of the poor, of a *bigger* nature, and more effective powers, than the present, over which we have long slept, we shall be soon awakened to certain ruin, as to the morals of the poor, and the property of those who maintain them.

Any other deviation from the plan, which that speech gave a glimpse of to the House of Commons, it is by no means my intention to observe upon ; nor am I bold enough to assert, that the plan referred to is now the best policy, and replete with the ~~wildest~~ humanity ; but, on the contrary, believe, more knowledge of local facts and circumstances may be necessary, before a bill of this extreme importance is passed into a law ; and it may be no improbable conjecture, that the investigation of the management and conduct of the poor, their morals, habits, economy, and feelings, being left open, the stream of practical information and theoretic knowledge being kept running, will refine itself ; and the real state and situation of the poor in society, and the rule of conduct with respect to them, that is most likely to benefit them, and the nation itself, will more clearly appear ; consequently, that a law made in the maturity of such an investigation will be more likely to approach perfection than one enacted in its infancy.

While this is going through the press, Mr. Whitbread has again urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring forward the debate on the bill now before parliament ; declaring, at the same time, that, unless the sense of the House is taken on that now before them, he will himself introduce some proposition on the subject.

Without doubting, in the least, the abilities of Mr. Whitbread to offer a proposition in favour of the labouring classes of men, or his wish to stand forth ~~in~~ the eyes of the nation as their protector and friend ; it may with truth be asserted, that, if his proposed plan be of the nature of his last effort, it ought not to be the law of the land : because, as has been proved, it has not necessity, justice, or convenience, for its basis ; and, if it is, in this respect, like most of the late acts on the subject of the poor, that it applies itself only to ~~some small~~ part of this capacious field of legislation, it ought not to supersede a general investigation of the subject, now it has the light of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's abilities thrown steadily upon the whole system ; but still Mr. Whitbread's intention

intention is no bad symptom in the case, which wants information, and stands in need of the clearest lights of practical experience and theoretic ability; and every other light which may prevent stumbling at the threshold of an intricate subject of this importance is of consequence. A good act of parliament, a few months later, is better than a doubtful one a few months sooner; and, when all sufficient information is obtained, we feel ourselves safe in Mr. Pitt's application of it to every wise and humane purpose. The present system already too much resembles a thing of shreds and patches, to bear more bolstering statutes; and, probably, a total repeal of every act of parliament since the 43d of Elizabeth. A strict and active execution of that act alone might be attended with better effect than the present system, as at present executed, although assisted with every additional bill, which each member in the House of Commons might think it expedient to propose, and the parliament to pass.

In the mean time, it is probable, that such a return of the annual accounts of the overseers to parliament, as has been recommended, being tried somewhat more than one year, every necessary information would be obtained. By such an act, for the overseers keeping their accounts under certain heads, and those accounts to be returned to parliament in the manner as was first proposed, the information of two years would be collected by Easter, 1799, if the act was to pass by Christmas; the number of claimants for the weekly allowances to the children of the poor, together with the total expenses attending that humane measure proposed by the bill, before the House of Commons, would be known; as also the effect occasioned by schools of industry, in those parishes where they have been instituted, as far as the morals and the earnings of the children have been meliorated and increased, would be seen; whence the propriety of a general institution of them throughout the kingdom might be estimated; and, during this time, the effect of a parliamentary investigation

LETTER LVII.

into, and control over, the management of the poor might be judged of, by the proof of a greater circumspection in the conduct of the overseers, and of the poor themselves, when conscious that the eye of the greatest authority in the kingdom is constantly over their conduct. These and many other important articles of information might in this short time be obtained on the subject, as well as a probable amendment of conduct in the parish-officers, and of morals and manners in the people, without any very considerable addition of expense.

LETTER LVII.

THE exertions of the Rev. Mr. Bouyer, in the cause of industry and the poor, by the institution, continued patronage, and supervision, of the schools of industry in Lincolnshire, which have been mentioned in an early part of this tract, occasioned me to wish much for the correspondence of that gentleman on the subject; which honour I have very lately obtained by the kind interference of my valuable friend Mr. Spranger, a master in Chancery; who, at my request, informed Mr. Bouyer of my wish to have an answer to a few questions respecting the schools under his direction, which he was so obliging to comply with, by favouring me with a very polite letter on the subject, full of important information.

1st. In answer to my questions, Mr. Bouyer says, That schools of industry are, when properly administered, certainly very profitable to parishes: the average absolute numerical profit, clear of all expenses, except the first building and furnishing, may be estimated, by the lowest computation, at a shilling a week each for all the children admitted into them:—at a much larger, though less

less certainly estimable, sum, in the importunate applications for relief which they prevent; — but if they were generally enforced, regulated, and sustained, by legislative authority, at a rate of profit (arising necessarily out of the melioration of principles and habits) perfectly incalculable.

2d. That the honorary and intrinsically valuable rewards to meritorious children are fully kept up, and indeed rather increased, in proportion to the present state of the society's funds; and the friends and promoters of the institution have never seen any reason to depart, in any material particular, from the manner of their application and distribution.

3d. In some places, the poor are become fully sensible of the benefits of the institution; and, in a neighbouring market-town, absolutely importuned the persons who had formed the poor-house to open in it a day-school of industry, for the employment of the children of the town; a benefit of which they this year lament the privation, occasioned by the selfishness and indolence of the persons, into whose hands the management of that house has now fallen; but that much impression has not been made on the minds of the poor in general.

4th. That knitting and spinning jersey are the only objects to which the schools can now attend; and that these were the principal, but by no means the only, objects he had in contemplation, had he been favoured with more universal and more persevering support.

Mr. Bouyer's letter contains also many very conclusive reasons why these schools, in Lincolnshire, have not in general hitherto met with that full success, that every friend to humanity expected, and had reason to hope, that part of the kingdom would have received from the experiment; but, at the same time, the following pleasing account of the good effects arising from them has been extracted from his very friendly and valuable communication.

That

That he has the heart-felt pleasure of seeing a general tenor of regularity and good conduct mark the lives of those young people who have received the favours of the society ; and of *particularly* remarking, that those, who have been honoured with the *highest* rewards, are *equally* distinguished by the commendation of the masters whom they serve, and that some of them are advantageously settled in life, through the assistance of this institution ; and becoming, as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, happy, useful, and virtuous, members of society.

That the plan is still pursued of rewarding meritorious youth, in proportion to the scale to which the funds of the schools are narrowed ; and every day's experience, whether of success or inconvenience, still confirms the expediency of schools ; which, in the few places where they are kept up, materially contribute to the good order of the parish, and the diminution of its burthens ; whilst the only difficulties of their present administration arise from the comparative uncertainty of the work of those candidates who are not collected under one regular government, and whom, for want of schools, they are forced to admit to a participation of the premiums.

The knitting trials, restrained to children under eight years of age, cause as early exertions as human nature is capable of. They had one of them on April 27th : there were twenty-seven candidates, under eight years old, for fifteen premiums. The trial consisted in their knitting up each seventeen yards in length of worsted, as part of a stocking, upon middle-sized needles ; and the child who finished it, the second of the whole number, was only five years old, and performed that task without one single flip, or mistake, in twenty-nine minutes : that work was well worth a halfpenny ; and, according to the proportion which practice teaches to settle with some certainty between a single hour's exertions and a common day's work of eight hours only, that little child could, without any sort of fatigue or hindrance from proper play and exercise,

ercise, earn a shilling a week at this most unprofitable employment; and when it is considered that, without such encouragements as are held out by the society, the eldest child there would never have learnt any work at all, we may, from such instances, estimate, in some degree, the value of all such public rewards.

The society, which seemed to be at its lowest ebb last year, is now apparently gaining fresh vigour, and the spirit of it plainly reviving. This appeared at the adjudication-meeting, on April 27th, by a considerable increase in the number of candidates, in the proportion of one-fourth more than last year. Besides this, four neighbouring parishes have intimated their intention to build a central school on a large plan. This revival may be attributed partly to Mr. Pitt's having declared his intention of introducing schools of industry into general practice.

In some other counties, and parts of counties, the plan of schools of industry has been more successfully tried than in Lincolnshire: no where more so, in Mr. Bouyer's opinion, than in the county of Rutland, which began very soon after those in Lincolnshire, and literally adopted all their proceedings and forms. From these they have since only departed in very few instances; some of which variations are happy consequences of the spirit with which they are supported, and apply to objects highly proper and beneficial. That society flourishes exceedingly, and is honoured, not only by the countenance and patronage, but also by the cordial co-operation, of the first noblemen and gentlemen of the county.

Mr. Bouyer wished to return the most explicit answers to the questions which were sent him, but, in so doing, a very considerable difficulty arose from the fear of misconception. He says,

The Society of Industry may be considered in two different aspects. *First*, as a trial of the general plan of assembling, under proper government, the poor children of the parish, from the earliest part of their infancy at which they are capable of any exertion,

exertion, till they shall be old and strong enough for service, or labour in husbandry; and giving them, in that important interval, a public education, by means profitable to themselves and parents, and capable of kindling honest ambition and emulation in their minds. *Secondly*, as a local establishment in that part of the county where the plan originated.—The success of the undertaking, in these two views of it, has been extremely different: flattering and encouraging, beyond description, in the *former*; but, in the *latter*, obstructed by various difficulties, which have tried the patience and perseverance of its friends and well-wishers very severely.

Mr. Bouyer also wishes to have it observed, that this is no new representation of the matter; in proof of which he begs leave to refer to his Statement, p. 96, 97, and 98, of the last Edition of the Society's Pamphlet, published eight years ago, part of which may be seen by the reader in the 34th Letter of this Series: and, as a farther proof of this observation, the pamphlet alluded to then goes on to state,

" That, in the mean while, the Society of Industry seems to have made some little progress in its humble walk, as a preparatory step to a more general and comprehensive establishment; but the Editor cannot refrain from observing, that many non-resident proprietors of large estates in these parts, whose goodness of heart and charitable disposition cannot be questioned, appear to have been negligently, or perhaps indifferently, kept from the knowledge of the efforts for reformation made by the society, of the success of those efforts in part, and of the much greater efficacy which would have accrued to those salutary measures from *their benefactions and subscriptions*, and still more from *their influence and authority* properly exerted.

" Among the many ill consequences which attend the annual change of overseers, the society have sustained a very considerable

table diminution of its income by the ignorance, neglect, prejudices, or personal resentments, of new-comers into office, who have often withdrawn the periodical subscriptions after having received the greatest benefits from the society; and, in many instances, to the bitter disappointment of many deserving children, whom, by these means, they disqualified from becoming candidates for the society's premiums." His Letter then continues to state,

That, after the experience which has since been had, and although the fund for rewarding merit, and the circle of its influence, have now been reduced to one-third of their original extent; although the operation of the laws above-recited, and of many other local disadvantages, which it would be tedious, and, in some degrees, invidious, to enumerate; yet none of these disappointments have had the smallest tendency to invalidate the evidence which the trial has procured of the general utility of the measure, if not of its absolute necessity, as affording the only probable means of national reform.

But it seems to be the opinion of my correspondent, that its success in that view must depend on legislative support; and, to make that support effectual, there must be,

1. A general uniformity in the outline, to give not only stability to the regulation, but a proper direction to the efforts of the inferior agents in it.

2. A permanent administration, by skilful and responsible persons, substituted to the rotation of overseers; which is the most conspicuous blemish of our poor-laws; for, they seem to be enacted on the absurd supposition that skill, honesty, and perseverance, were transferrable, from one farmer to another, with the parish-books.

3. A proper inducement to persons, who are able and responsible, to give up their whole time, or a much greater portion of it that can be expected gratuitously; especially, if the prin-

ciple of rotation is, as he apprehends it must be, totally relinquished.

4. A very particular care so to place such appointments that they shall not degenerate into patronage, jobs, pensions, and sinecures. Offices, and, to a certain degree, lucrative ones, must be created; but they should be much fewer, more effective, and more responsible, than in any plan that has yet appeared. Perhaps the greatest objection to that which is now under public contemplation is, the multiplicity of offices, by rotation, slower indeed than that of the present overseers, and depending upon a general activity in public business, which has never yet existed but in speculation; instead of putting the execution into the hands of fewer persons, who should continue in office, *quamdiu se bene gerint*, and be held to their duty by the only tye which can secure the performance of it, a responsibility proportioned to the value of the employment. The utmost expectation that can be formed, by persons acquainted with human nature and the present state of society, is this, — that as many patriotic and public-spirited men may be found, in each county or district, as shall be strictly necessary to enforce that responsibility, and to examine into the discharge of those purchased duties, looking for no other reward than the consciousness of their own integrity and zeal, and prepared, at the same time, to hear their good qualities, and the exertions by which they display them, oftener questioned, or misrepresented, than thankfully, or even candidly, acknowledged.

Such is the opinion of a gentleman whose exertions, and consequently experience, in the regulation of these schools of industry, are well known; and whose well-founded judgement, and prediction of the probable advantages arising from an institution of them by legislative authority, merit great attention. It would be presumptuous were the writer of these Letters, whose experience, in this most useful line of regulation, is so trifling as to confine

confine his judgement to that of a mere theorist, to add any observations to those contained in this Letter, or to prolong it by any animadversions on what his correspondent has written: he will only venture to suggest, that, probably, as to the *general* management of the poor, in the parish, the institution of overseers, by the 43d of Elizabeth, was not quite so replete with absurdity as his correspondent represents; and conceives that they are, even in *these times*, the properest persons to be entrusted with the management of the poor, a person of longer durability in office, and more particularly qualified for the purpose, having the supervision of the schools of industry: besides, it appears as somewhat tending to injustice, that the *overseers of the poor*, who are in rotation, those from whose pockets the rates for the maintenance of the poor are taken, should not be entrusted with the disbursement of the money they collect, were that disbursement but subject to the supervision and control of Parliament.

L E T T E R LVIII.

DEAR SIR,

AS most of these Letters originally were sent to you for your very useful publication, the Annals of Agriculture; as they took their rise from some of those friendly conversations in which we have so frequently agitated the interests of Agriculture, and the humbler votaries to her shrine, the labouring-poor; with great propriety may the last of the Series be addressed to you; more especially as it affords the writer an opportunity of acknowledging publicly the satisfaction he has received from the long habits of correspondence and friendly intercourse which have subsisted be-

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tween us, and the real pleasure he takes in seeing you placed in that situation where your abilities, and indefatigable application to the interests of agriculture, have proved, and have the greatest chance of continuing to prove, an honour to yourself, and an advantage to your country.

We have often lamented together,

Non ullus aratro

Dignus honor.

That cause of complaint has now been sometime removed by the institution of a Board which has been of the greatest service, as well as honour, to the cause of agriculture; for, during a war which has increased our expenditure of money and men beyond all former experience or calculations, we have seen nothing of that impoverished condition of our fields, so elegantly lamented by our favourite Georgical poet, in the continuation of the quotation :

Squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curvæ rigidum falces constantur in Ensem.

But, on the contrary, agriculture has flourished with a vigour which even peace itself can scarcely increase.

In the course of these Letters which have been addressed to you, it has been the view of the writer to preserve the subject of the poor as near as possible what Sir Josiah Child calls it, *a calm subject*: it certainly ought to be so; but it is not at all times that militating interests, contending opinions, and information of dubious certainty, will admit it to remain so: thus far, at least, I have resolved,—that not an atom of the controversy of general politics, or the ill temper of party prejudice, should be suffered to fall from my pen. The Letters profess an Inquiry into the History of the Poor, their Rights and Duties, and the Laws respecting them. No collateral subject has been agitated which may tend to interrupt that philosophic coolness with which even our *dearest* interests are best canvassed; and your friend stops his expressions of approbation, at this point, solely with the view of preserving these pages, which

are

are dedicated to the service of the poor, free from any allusion that may lead to a discussion of general politics.

After having been obliged, in the correction, and, in some instances, alteration, of his former publication, to peruse again what he had before written, and to connect with it the new matter which has since arisen, it is probable that, while the whole is fresh in his recollection, the mind may be able to judge more accurately than after the impression of facts and reasons have, by time, become in some measure effaced, of what would be the real and substantial practical improvements which may be introduced in the management of the poor; and he confesses that, of the various ameliorations of the system contained in the Bill now before the House, two seem to your correspondent particularly prominent;—schools of industry, and parliamentary inspection and control. The other parts of the proposed system, although very probably productive of good, have not that good so unmixed with some contiguous evil, which may adulterate the mass, as have these two great objects; and Mr. Bouyer's information, as contained in the last Letter, corroborates the opinion strongly as to the effect of schools of industry when under the control of the legislature; which control also must be an active principle in all the departments of this business, and will be more efficacious than a thousand statutes whose enforcing sanctions are penalties never sued for. The laws of certificates and removals, and those which enabled the overseer to hold out the parish work-house to the distressed pauper as a bugbear to deter him from asking for relief, require no additional freedom from restraint, since the passing those acts of parliament which have been mentioned in the Letters continuing this publication; and the law of settlements (that omission being corrected which has been pointed out as the consequence of the act of parliament which, rumour says, the public stands indebted for to the attention and humanity of Mr. East) will probably remain ~~as~~ harmless, but, were the principles rightly understood, I think an unnecessary; mode of identifying

identifying the parish which must ultimately support the needy pauper; although that mode may still continue to be attended with expenses of law. Some hints received from my friends have occasioned me to consider the probable consequences of a total repeal of all acts of parliament since the 43d of Elizabeth, and the addition of two acts of parliament as aisles, or wings, to that excellent edifice; an act for the education of the children of the poor in industrious habits; and another, instituting a comprehensive and cheap system of parliamentary inspection and control. To judge of the propriety of such an idea, it would be necessary to examine into what would be the real state and condition of the poor, in every bearing and dependency, supposing the magistrates and overseers had no rule of law by which to regulate their conduct, except that statute; an investigation which would require much attention and reflection; and, it is to be feared, if any explanation or additional regulation might be thought necessary, each individual, who might turn his attention to the subject, conceiving the rule, which strikes his mind, as essential, and that the system would be imperfect without it, more auxiliary clauses would be proposed than are contained in all the acts which have been passed since the reign of Elizabeth.

But it is time to conclude the subject, which, thank God, is now before the House of Commons; and is brought before them in the best manner, by the only individual in the nation, who, from every concurrent circumstance favourable to the full investigation of this important regulation, except the political anxiety of the times, could with the greatest and most favourable propriety introduce a law which will affect the internal regulation and comfort of the *whole kingdom*, subject to the poor-laws. This is a regulation which affects *no particular class or description of men in parliament*, confined neither to the interests of those on the right or on the left of the Speaker's chair, but equally concerns every individual in the House; and, when the subject comes before the

House

House of Lords, every peer will feel that the dearest interests of his country are in question ; and I cannot help anticipating, in idea, the satisfaction his Majesty will experience, when the royal prerogative stamps the sanction of law on an act which is calculated to educate millions of his subjects, the rising and the future generations of the labouring-poor of this kingdom, in habits of industry and moral economy, sure preludes to a greater chance of comfort in this life and happiness in the next.

If these pages have in any degree been the means of introducing or accelerating this measure, your friend will have no reason to regret that he has, although in a rough and unpolished style, ventured to publish the History of the Poor, their Rights and Duties, and the Laws respecting them ; which, by laying open to the public the distresses of that valuable and numerous branch of our countrymen, and the great expenses of the other classes of the state in their maintenance, have induced those in power and authority to make use of the advantages of their situation in the behalf of their distressed fellow-subjects.

T. R.

May 11th, 1797.

THE END.

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